



Glossary of Human Rights Terms

GLOSSARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS TERMS

Note: All terms in capital letters are cross references to other terms in the glossary.

ACCESSION: Acceptance of a TREATY by a state that did not participate in its negotiation or drafting.

ADOPTION: Process by which a state agrees to international law; with regard to treaties, adoption usually refers to the initial diplomatic stage at which a treaty is accepted; in order to become effective, after adoption a TREATY usually must be RATIFIED by the legislature.

ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: The initial prerequisites that an individual, group or state must fulfill before it is permitted to present its CLAIM to a particular TREATY-MONITORING BODY or other HUMAN RIGHTS fact-finding or judging organization or court.

ADVISORY OPINION: Opinion of a court or court-like body that provides an interpretation of a law or norm; advisory opinions differ from other forms of opinions in that the advisory opinion need not concern a concrete case (one presenting real parties claimed to be harmed and entitled to a REMEDY).

ADVOCACY: specific, short-term activities to reach a long-term vision; actions designed to draw a community's attention to an issue and to direct policy makers to a solution.

AFFIRMATIVE DISCRIMINATION/ AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Affirmative steps taken by governments, educational institutions, businesses and other bodies to eliminate existing discrimination, provide an immediate remedy for past discrimination and prevent discrimination from taking place in the future; promotes EQUALITY by recognizing that when people are in unequal positions treating them the same perpetuates systemic inequalities; permitted for some conditions under the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN and other international and regional documents.

AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (adopted 1981, entered into force 1986): Establishes HUMAN RIGHTS standards and protections for the African region; notable for addressing community and group rights and duties.

AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS: Institutional body primarily responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (adopted in 1969; entered into force 1978): Establishes HUMAN RIGHTS standards and protections for the Americas; creates the INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

AMERICAN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT AND DUTIES OF MAN (1965): NON-BINDING declaration of regional HUMAN RIGHTS standards; it has evolved into an influential document as the AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS has given normative value to the Declaration.

BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION: Consensus document emerging from the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, reviewing and re-affirming women's HUMAN RIGHTS in all aspects of life; signed by representatives at the Conference and morally but not legally binding.

BILATERAL TREATY: Formal, binding agreement between two states.

BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS: See INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) and WORLD BANK.

CAIRO PROGRAMME FOR ACTION: Consensus document which emerged from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, affirming women's reproductive health and rights; signed by representatives at the Conference and morally but not legally binding.

CEDAW: See CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (signed 1948; entered into force 1951): Initial charter of the ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES creating INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (signed 1945; entered into force 1945): Initial document of the United Nations which spells out the rules for the UN and restates some of the basic principles of international law.

CHILD ABUSE: See MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN.

CLAIM: Allegation by an individual or state that it is entitled to a REMEDY for an injury caused by an offender (usually the state).

CLAIMANT: One who brings a CLAIM.

CODIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW: Process of reducing CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW to written form.

COLLECTIVE RIGHTS: See PEOPLES' RIGHTS.

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: Body formed by the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) of the United Nations to deal with HUMAN RIGHTS; one of the first and most important international HUMAN RIGHTS bodies.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW): Body formed by the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) of the United Nations as the principal UN policy-making body for women; monitors implementation of the BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION.

COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE: The TREATY MONITORY BODY established by the CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMANE, DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT to hear violations of that CONVENTION.

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: The political arm of the EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS; the Committee can refer cases to the EUROPEAN COURT ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: The TREATY MONITORING BODY created by the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN to monitor state compliance with that CONVENTION.

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: The TREATY MONITORING BODY created by the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION to monitor state compliance with that CONVENTION.

COMMUNICATION: See COMPLAINT.

COMPLAINT: In legal terms, the initial document that begins an action; a complaint sets forth a brief summary of what happened and argues why relief should be granted. In a human rights case, the complaint (or PETITION, or COMMUNICATION) alleges that government, or individual or institution that must answer to human rights standards (such as a surrogate of the government) has violated the HUMAN RIGHTS of specific individuals or groups of individuals.

COMPLAINT-INFORMATION PROCEDURES: The goal of complaint-information procedures is not to redress individual grievances but to identify broad human rights violations affecting a large population; petitions are received only as part of the information before the body considering the matter; authors of PETITIONS have no right to a REMEDY and may not even have a right to be informed about the disposition of the case.

COMPLAINT-RECOURSE PROCEDURES: The goal of complaint-recourse procedures is the redress of specific grievances. A successful procedure in this case may result in a legally enforceable REMEDY, orders that force the government to compensate a victim, reprimand the perpetrator or even change government policies and practices.

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (CSCE): See ORGANIZATION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE).

CONVENTION: Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with TREATY and COVENANT. Conventions are stronger than DECLARATIONS in that they are legally binding for signatory states and governments can be held for violating them. The United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY creates international norms and standards when it adopts Conventions; MEMBER STATES can then ratify the UN Conventions, signifying acceptance of their obligations.

CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (adopted 1984; entered into force 1987): CONVENTION defining and prohibiting torture.

CONVENTION AND RECOMMENDATION ON WORKERS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES: 1981 ILO Convention recognizing that both men and women have family responsibilities.

CONVENTION CONCERNING EQUAL REMUNERATION FOR MEN AND WOMEN WORKERS FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE: 1953 ILO Convention declaring that men and women should have equal wages for equal work.

CONVENTION CONCERNING INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES IN INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES: 1989 ILO Convention focusing on the responsibility of States to develop coordinated and systematic plans to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

CONVENTION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TRAFFIC OF PERSONS AND THE EXPLOITATION OF THE PROSTITUTION OF OTHERS (adopted 1949): CONVENTION prohibiting forced prostitution and the sex-trafficking in women and girls.

CONVENTION ON CONSENT TO MARRY, MINIMUM AGE FOR MARRIAGE AND THE REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES (1962): CONVENTION recognizing the right of women and girls to be free from forced marriage and child marriages.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW or "WOMEN'S CONVENTION") (adopted 1979; entered into force 1981): The first legally binding international document prohibiting discrimination against women and obligating governments to take steps to advance the equality of women; draws no distinction between public and private life; does not accept CULTURE as an excuse for discrimination; establishes the COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN as the TREATY MONITORING BODY for the CONVENTION. See also GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 19, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (CERD) (adopted 1965; entered into force 1969): CONVENTION defining and prohibiting racial discrimination.

CONVENTION ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN (approved 1953; entered into force 1954): Early CONVENTION re-affirming women's rights in the political sphere.

CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE (approved 1948, entered into force 1951): International CONVENTION defining and prohibiting GENOCIDE; first human rights TREATY of the United Nations.

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES (adopted 1990; not yet entered into force in 1998): CONVENTION defining the rights of migrant workers and their families.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC) (adopted 1989; entered into force 1990): CONVENTION setting forth a full spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights of children.

CONVENTION REFUGEE: See CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES.

CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES (adopted 1951; entered into force 1954; revised by 1967 Protocol): Main CONVENTION establishing the definition of a REFUGEE and stating the rights of refugees and obligations of receiving states; defines a refugee as a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion and who is outside the country of origin. Uprooted people who stay within their country are known as DISPLACED PEOPLE.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE: Regional organization that acts as an umbrella organization for regional cooperation on political, social and economic matters; note that the Council should be distinguished from the EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, a wholly economic venture.

COVENANT: Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with CONVENTION and TREATY; the major international HUMAN RIGHTS covenants are the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS and the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.

CULTURE: A feature of societies that is constantly renegotiated by all people that make up a social unit; Article 5 of the WOMEN'S CONVENTION calls for the modification of "the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view toward achieving elimination of prejudices."

CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW: Law that becomes binding on states although it is not written, but rather adhered to consistently out of custom; when enough states have begun to behave as if something is the obligatory law, it indeed becomes law; one of the main SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

DECLARATION: Document represents agreed upon standards, but which is not legally binding; United Nations conferences usually produce two sets of declarations: one by government representatives and one by NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs); the GENERAL ASSEMBLY often issues influential but legally NON-BINDING declarations.

DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (1967): NON-BINDING declaration of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY on the rights of women; precursor to the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (1993): NON-BINDING declaration of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY on the right of women to be free from violence and the obligations of governments to take steps to eliminate violence against women.

DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS OR LINGUISTIC MINORITIES: 1992 UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARATION asserting that all states have an obligation to let minority people enjoy their own CULTURE, practice their own religion and use their own language.

DEVELOPMENT: Traditionally equated with economic growth, as measured by GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT and level of industrialization. Human rights advocates urge that development should encompass the improvement of people's well being --- wherever they live -- through a focus on economic and social justice rather than economic growth per se.

DISABLED PERSON: People who have both genetic and acquired physical, mental and psychological conditions that may require accommodation in order for them to participate fully and equally in society; See STANDARD RULES ON THE EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

DISCRIMINATION: See NON-DISCRIMINATION or DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: Defined in the WOMEN'S CONVENTION as "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (Article 1).

DISPLACED PERSON: A person who flees his or her homeland due to political persecution or war, but does not cross state borders; displaced persons can be used as a phrase to refer to people who may consider themselves to be REFUGEES but who do not qualify for official refugee status under the CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES.

DIVISION ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: See UNITED NATIONS DIVISION ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN.

DOMESTIC SYSTEMS: Legal systems of a particular country; used synonymously with NATIONAL SYSTEMS.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Violence among members of a family or household; in these cases, one person gains power through use of physical or emotional coercion; any person in a household could be the target of domestic violence but it is most frequently experienced by women.

DRAFT DECLARATION ON PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Proposed comprehensive declaration on human rights and the environment drafted in 1994; not yet adopted as of 1998.

EARTH SUMMIT: Nickname for the UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC): United Nations council comprised of 54 members and concerned primarily with the field of population, economic development, human rights and criminal justice; high-ranking body that receives and discharges HUMAN RIGHTS reports in a variety of instances.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURES: Systems and processes by which goods and services are exchanged, i.e. trade, economic aid, markets, companies, businesses and financial institutions. See ECONOMY.

ECONOMY: The set of structures and relationships which guide the distribution and allocation of financial and material resources; it includes the patterns by which income and wealth are distributed, work is regulated, wages are established, whose work is recognized, what work is counted and how resources are distributed.

ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS: REPORTING, COMPLAINT or other procedures at the national, regional or international level that place obligations on states to make HUMAN RIGHTS real.

ENTERED INTO FORCE: The day on which a treaty becomes effective; the point at which enough parties have signed on to an agreement to make it effective.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: Term used to express a positive interconnection of environmental and social rights.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM: Term used to express the disproportionate state of environmental conditions and health that people of colour endure as one aspect of racial discrimination in society.

EQUALITY: The notion that all human beings are entitled to the same human rights without distinction. Article 2 of the UDHR embodies an equality principle. Equality does not necessarily mean treating people the same but rather taking whatever steps are necessary to promote a more just society for all.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The administrative and executive institution of the EUROPEAN UNION.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: Body established by the EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS to investigate grievances of HUMAN RIGHTS and brings charges of violations. The Commission consists of a number of members equal to that of the number of contracting parties to the CONVENTION.

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE OR INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT: TREATY-MONITORING BODY set up under the EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE OR INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT. Each party to the CONVENTION is obligated to permit visits by the Committee to investigate complaints.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COURT OF JUSTICE: Court created in 1952 as part of the European Coal and Steel Community; Court hears economic claims under the EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY Treaty and related agreements.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (signed 1950; entered into force 1953): Regional document that guarantees civil and political HUMAN RIGHTS and establishes machinery for their supervision and enforcement; see EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER for complementary document pertaining to social and economic rights.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE AND INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (adopted 1987; entered into force 1989): Regional parallel to the CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT; distinctive feature is the establishment of the EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE OR INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: The principal policy and rule-making institution of the EUROPEAN UNION.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: Court established by the EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS to hear allegations of HUMAN RIGHTS violation. The Court consists of a number of judges equal to that of the Members of the COUNCIL OF EUROPE. Note that this is distinguishable from the EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COURT OF JUSTICE, a body that hears economic complaints.

EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE: The supreme tribunal of the EUROPEAN UNION.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY: Established in 1958 to develop a common European market free of trade barriers and to promote harmonization of laws and practices.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The principal deliberative and supervisory institution of the EUROPEAN UNION.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (signed 1961; entered into force 1965): Regional document concerned with developing and protecting social and economic rights; intended to be complementary to the EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, but having less force.

EUROPEAN UNION: A regional INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION that has as its goals the elimination of internal frontiers and the establishment of an economic and monetary union.

EXHAUSTION REQUIREMENT: Requirement that a person, group or state bringing a HUMAN RIGHTS claim first try to bring the case at the domestic level.

EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES (EPZ): Areas established by governments to attract foreign investments and industries; they offer tax incentives and a large pool of workers ready to work for low wages; they ban union activity and waive labour regulations or import-export barriers. The US - Mexico border area is one such area where factories called "maquiladoras" have been set up.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM): Also known as female circumcision; cultural practice harmful to women's health. There are three types: (1) clitoridectomy: partial or total removal of the clitoris; (2) excision: removal of the clitoris and vaginal lips; (3) infibulation: removal of all external genitals and the stitching together of the lips with a small opening for menstrual blood and urine.

FGM: See FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.

1503 PROCEDURES: limited procedures that allow a CLAIMANT to bring a HUMAN RIGHTS case directly to the Secretary General of United Nations; addresses situations which appear to reveal a widespread pattern of gross HUMAN RIGHTS abuses.

GENDER: The ways in which roles, attitudes, values and relationships regarding women and men are constructed by all societies all over the world. While sex is determined by nature, gender is socially constructed; almost invariably gender distinctions function to subordinate and discriminate against women.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: Violence committed against women as women; violence particular to women, such as rape, sexual assault, female circumcision, or dowry burning; violence against women for failing to conform to restrictive social norms; the VIENNA DECLARATION specifically recognized gender-based violence as a human rights concern.

GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX (GDI): Measures developments of States according to the same broad factors as the HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX, but highlights the inequality in these spheres between men and women.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION: Discrimination based on socially constructed ideas and perceptions of men and women.

GENDER-NEUTRALITY: Treatment of a problem without recognition of gender; myth of gender neutrality in human rights eliminates recognition that treating people identically despite unequal situations perpetuates rather than eradicates injustices.

GENDER PERSPECTIVES: Notion that problems and solutions should be examined with the implications of gender in mind. This concept is based on an understanding that in all situations some perspective of interpreting reality is present. Historically, that perspective has most often been biased towards the male view and, accordingly, most perspectives on reality have not taken women's views and experiences into account, rendering the everyday violations of women's human rights invisible.

GENDER SPECIFIC CLAIMS: Human rights claims relating to abuse women suffer because of their gender; when HUMAN RIGHTS are being violated due at least in part to a person's gender and/or when women's experience of a human rights violation differs from men's experience due to gender-specific consequences or experiences.

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT): International organization that seeks to create and enforce a worldwide set of regulations to reduce trade barriers.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY: One of the principal organs of the United Nations consisting of all MEMBER STATES; issues DECLARATIONS and adopts CONVENTIONS on HUMAN RIGHTS issues; the actions of the General Assembly are governed by the CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LAW: Principles that appear nearly universally in state's domestic law and, thus, over time become binding on all states; one of the main SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 19, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (Eleventh Session 1992): Influential RECOMMENDATION of the TREATY-MONITORING BODY charged with enforcing the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN; defines violence as a form of discrimination against women.

GENOCIDE: Any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting the conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. See CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE.

GENEVA CONVENTIONS RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN TIME OF WAR (opened for signature 1949, entered into force 1950; supplemented by PROTOCOL II ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF AUGUST 12, 1949): Main source of HUMANITARIAN LAW pertaining to treatment of civilians in armed conflicts.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS: NONGOVERNMENTAL groups, usually not-for profit, formed to mobilize people and communities to address social, economic and political problems; usually this term refers to groups working on ADVOCACY at the local level.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP): The measure of all goods and services produced in a country; GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP) adds the income of nationals from foreign activity and subtracts the income of foreigners from activity in the country measured; traditionally, neither the GDP nor the GNP includes women's unwaged labour.

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP): See GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP).

HABBITAT CONFERENCE: UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS.

HELSINKI ACCORDS: Declaration of principles by the CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE which seeks peace and HUMAN RIGHTS in Europe; first Helsinki document was called the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference (1975).

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: United Nations office charged with the promotion and protection of HUMAN RIGHTS worldwide.

HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Unwelcome conduct that is so severe or pervasive as to change the conditions of the claimant's employment and create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Hostile work environment harassment does not require an impact on an economic benefit. It may involve coworkers or third parties, not just supervisors. This type of SEXUAL HARASSMENT is not limited to sexual advances; it can include hostile or offensive behavior based on the person's sex.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI): Measures development of States according to a variety of factors including health, literacy and standard of living indicators.

HUMAN RIGHTS: The rights people are entitled to simply for being human, irrespective of their citizenship, nationalist, race, ethnicity, language, sex, sexuality or abilities; human rights become enforceable as they become CODIFIED as CONVENTIONS, COVENANTS or TREATIES, or as they become recognized as CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE : The TREATY MONITORING BODY created by the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS to investigate and hear claims pertaining to civil and political rights under that Covenant; one of six bodies charges with monitoring compliance of member states with UN human rights conventions.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: See WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS.

HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES: HUMAN RIGHTS are related to one's human dignity; they are UNIVERSAL, INALIENABLE, INDIVISIBLE, INTERCONNECTED AND INTER-INDEPENDENT; governments are obligated to enforce such rights in a manner that promotes EQUALITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION.

HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS: Refers to the various groupings of human rights laws, courts, investigatory bodies and other organizations at the national, regional and international levels, which may provide appropriate ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS, such as court-like COMPLAINT procedures and audit-like MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES.

HUMANITARIAN LAW: The international rules that establish the rights of combatants and noncombatants in war. See GENEVA CONVENTIONS.

ICCPR: See INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.

ILO: See INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION.

ILO CONVENTION: See CONVENTION...

INALIENABILITY: Concept that HUMAN RIGHTS are universal and that they cannot be taken away under any circumstances,

INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINTS: COMPLAINTS of individuals or NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS; the OPTION PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS permits the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE to hear individual complaints.

INDIVISIBILITY: Notion that there is no hierarchy of rights; civil and political rights are equally as important as social, economic and cultural rights; principle reaffirmed by the VIENNA DECLARATION.

INFORMAL SECTOR: Sector of the ECONOMY that comprises a wide range of unregulated economic and "extra-legal" activities, generally involving work for pay that does not come in the form of wages, and employment conditions that are not regulated by local, state or national governments; informality describes not only the relation of the enterprise to the state, but also the relation between employers and workers, many of whom are likely to be family, and between buyers and sellers.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: An organ of the ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES with power to conduct investigations into alleged human rights violations and to recommend measures for the protection of HUMAN RIGHTS.

INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A seven-member judicial body which hears cases brought against member organizations concerning human rights abuses; an organ of the ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (signed 1969; entered into force 1978): CONVENTION providing human rights protections in the Americas and establishing the AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION TO PREVENT AND PUNISH TORTURE (adopted 1985; entered into force 1985): Regional corollary to the CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMANE OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (entered into force 1995): Regional CONVENTION that provides a new mechanism for women in the Americas who suffer from various forms of violence.

INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: Regional court that hears disputes referred by the INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS or MEMBER STATES and issues advisory opinions interpreting human rights treaties in the Americas.

INTER-STATE COMPLAINT: Complaint of one STATE (country) against another.

INTERCONNECTED AND INTERDEPENDENT: Notion that human rights interact in a dynamic interchange, reinforcing each other; denial of one human right has an impact on one's ability to exercise other human rights.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: A body whose members are composed of and supported by MEMBER STATES.

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONCILIATION AND DEVELOPMENT: See WORLD BANK.

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS: The UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS and the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)(adopted 1966; entered into force 1976): CONVENTION that declares that all people have a broad range of civil and political rights; one of three components of the INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS. The body charged with enforcing this covenant is the COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR)(adopted 1966; entered into force 1976): CONVENTION that declares that all people have a broad range of economic, social and cultural rights; one of three components of the INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON...: See CONVENTION ON...

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFI): International organizations designed to promote the world economy. The main institutions are the INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONCILIATION AND DEVELOPMENT (WORLD BANK) and the INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF); these institutions are often referred to as Bretton Woods Institutions.

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (IGO): A permanent organization set up by two or more states to carry on activities of common interest.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO): Established in 1919 as part of the Versailles Peace Treaty to improve working conditions and promote social justice; became a SPECIALIZED AGENCY of the United Nations in 1946; has passed a number of CONVENTIONS pertaining to women's human rights.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF): Established in 1944; facilitates world commerce by overseeing the currency exchange rates and by reducing foreign exchange restrictions of countries that have become members; the IMF has also created a reserve of funds to enable countries experiencing temporary balance of payments problems to continue trading without interruption. Since 1982 the IMF has issued loans requiring specific conditions, known as STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS.

JURISDICTION: The authority of courts or court-like bodies to hear and decide CLAIMS; can refer to the courts ability to hear particular subjects and/or to review cases brought by certain types of CLAIMANTS; jurisdiction can also refer to a geographic area of authority.

MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN: Emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse includes acts or failures to act by parents or caretakers that have caused or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs; it may be physical, educational, or emotional. Physical abuse is the inflicting of physical injury upon a child. Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behavior with a child.

MAQUILADORAS: See EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES.

MEMBER STATES: Countries that are members of particular international or regional body.

MIGRANTS: People who leave their place of origin for economic reasons or other reasons not covered under the limited definition of REFUGEE under the CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES.

MINORITY: Refers to groups with (1) fewer members, i.e. not the majority of a population, or (2) less power in society.

MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCEDURE: Procedures not generally resulting in legally-enforceable remedies; monitoring and reporting procedures resemble "audits" of government behavior which results in NON-BINDING recommendations. In some cases, the reporting resembles a self-inspection; governments report on their own compliance with human rights obligations or a monitoring body initiates the report on government behavior.

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNC): See TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

MULTILATERAL TREATY: TREATY between more than two states.

NAIROBI FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: Plan of action for women's equality that resulted from the Third United Nations Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985.

NATIONAL SYSTEMS: Legal systems of a particular country; used synonymously with DOMESTIC SYSTEMS.

NON-BINDING: A document that carries no formal legal obligations, but which may still carry moral obligations.

NON-DISCRIMINATION: Principle that people may not be treated differently based on arbitrary and impermissible criteria; discrimination based on grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location or any other status violates human rights. CEDAW defines DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

NON-TREATY BASED MECHANISMS: Provisions for the enforcement of human rights other than those that relate directly to a specific human rights TREATY, CONVENTION or COVENANT. For example, the SPECIALIZED AGENCIES of the United Nations often provide forms of complaint and/or monitoring procedures.

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs): Organization formed by and of people outside of government; nonprofit, human rights, humanitarian aid and grassroots organizations can all be NGOs.

OAS: See ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

OAU: See; ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY.

OPENED FOR SIGNATURE: Point at which a CONVENTION is formally introduced to and adopted by the GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

OPTIONAL PROTOCOL: Addendum to an international agreement to which the STATE PARTIES must agree separately; often places additional obligations to the parties, such as an agreement to submit to the jurisdiction of an international court.

OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (adopted 1966; entered into force 1976): Addendum attached to the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS; by signing this addendum, states agree to allow the HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE to consider INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINTS, that is complaints from individuals claiming to be denied any of the rights in the INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU): Organization of independent African states that work jointly to improve peace and the quality of life for the people of Africa. The OAU Charter, the guiding document of the group, was adopted in 1963.

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS): Organization of independent American states created to strengthen peace and security in the region and to promote regional cooperation on economic, social and cultural matters.

ORGANIZATION COMMUNE AFRICAINE ER MALAGACHE (OCAM): Organization of French-Speaking African states that work toward common political and economic goals.

ORGANIZATION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE) (formerly the CSCE): European attempt to settle security issues peacefully through a series of creative collaborative ventures; formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe; declared the HELSINKI ACCORDS.

PEOPLES' RIGHTS: Used synonymously with SOLIDARITY RIGHTS and COLLECTIVE RIGHTS; refers to the rights of groups, not just individuals, such as the s to development, peace and a healthy environment.

PETITION: See COMPLAINT.

PROCEDURE: In terms of HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS, procedures are the various ways in which human rights CLAIMS can be made; see COMPLAINT-INFORMATION PROCEDURE, COMPLAINT-RESOURCE PROCEDURE, and MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCEDURE.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS: Technical requirements that must be met to bring a CLAIM; distinguishable from SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENTS.

PROTOCOL: Supplemental addition to TREATY; when STATES PARTIES can still agree to the main treaty without signing on to the protocol, this is known as an OPTIONAL PROTOCOL.

PROTOCOL II ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF AUGUST 12, 1949 (opened for signature 1977, entered into force 1978): Sets forth requirements for humane treatment of victims on non-international armed conflicts; major source of HUMANITARIAN LAW.

QUID PRO QUO SEXUAL HARASSMENT: A form of SEXUAL HARASSMENT occurring when an employee is required to choose between submitting to sexual advances or losing a tangible benefit. The harasser must have power to control the employee's employment benefits.

RATIFICATION: Process by which a legislature confirms a government's action in signing a treaty; formal procedure by which a state becomes bound to a TREATY.

RECOMMENDATION: Documents explaining how a particular treaty should be interpreted and applied. The COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN has issued several influential recommendations. See GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 19, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

REFUGEE: A person who has fled from the country of origin to escape persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. People who leave their homes but who do not cross country boundaries are called DISPLACED PEOPLE. People who meet the requirements for refugee status under the CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES are called "Convention Refugees."

REFUGEE CONVENTION: See CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES.

REMEDY: In legal terms, the means by which a right is enforced or the violation of a right is prevented, redressed or compensated.

REPORTING PROCEDURE: See MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCEDURE.

RESERVATIONS: Exceptions that SIGNATORY STATES make to the document, that is provisions that they do not agree to follow. In signing a TREATY, states are not allowed to make reservations that undercut the fundamental meaning of the treaty; more reservation have been made to the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN than any other CONVENTION.

RIO DECLARATION: Issued by the UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT at Rio de Janeiro in 1992; links protection of the environment to sustainable environment.

SECURITY COUNCIL: Organ of the United Nations comprised of five permanent members and ten non-permanent members elected by the GENERAL ASSEMBLY; this influential body attempts to bring about peaceful settlements of disputes.

SEXUAL ASSAULT: Includes rape and other forms of physical attack of a sexual nature. See VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN and MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; two types of sexual harassment recognized under some countries laws are QUID PRO QUO SEXUAL HARASSMENT and HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

SIGNATORY STATES: States that have signed a particular TREATY, CONVENTION or COVENANT.

SOLIDARITY RIGHTS: See PEOPLES' RIGHTS.

SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW: Primary sources listed in Article 38 of the Statue of the International Court of Justice are (1) TREATY; (2) CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW; (3) GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LAW; (4) Judicial decisions.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR: Official appointed to compile information on a subject, usually for a temporary period.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: Official appointed by the GENERAL ASSEMBLY in 1994 to investigate and make reports on cases of violence against women worldwide.

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS: Institutions created by international agreement to carry out the mandate of the United Nations in particular fields, such as UNHCR and WHO.

STANDARD RULES ON THE EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Guidelines for UN MEMBER STATES adopted by the GENERAL ASSEMBLY in 1993.

STATE: often synonymous with country; a group of people permanently occupying a fixed territory, having common laws and government and capable of conducting international affairs.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Liability of a state for the injuries it causes.

STATES PARTIES: Governments that have ratified a TREATY.

STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991 (Security Council Resolution, 1993): Main statute for the ad hoc WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA; similar Security Council Resolution adopted to create WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA; establishes the subject matter over which the court(s) have jurisdiction; specifically includes rape in war.

STOCKHOLM DECLARATION: Issued by United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972; asserts that a healthy environment is a HUMAN RIGHT and that states have the responsibility to not damage the environment of other states.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS (SAPs): Policies of INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS such as the INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND that place tight restrictions on the country's economy with the goal of increasing exports and decreasing deficits; encourage governments to adopt stabilization or austerity measures which entail cutting government spending on "non-essential" services; often have an adverse impact on women.

SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES: Influential sub-commission of the UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS charged with protection and promotion of the human rights of minorities.

SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENT: Requirement for using a CONVENTION that goes to the nature of a claim; distinguishable from PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS. For example, women bringing a claim under a certain CONVENTION must show that the CONVENTION applies to the subject matter of their case.

TRANSNATIONAL OR MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (TNC OR MNC): Large corporations that play a key role in globalizing the economy and exploiting pools of cheap labour and natural resources in developing countries to increase their profits and earnings.

TREATY: Formal agreement between states that defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations; used synonymously with CONVENTION. When national governments RATIFY treaties, they become part of their domestic legal obligations.

TREATY-MONITORING BODY: Body (usually called a Committee or Commission) set up by a treaty to monitor how well STATES PARTIES follow their obligations under that treaty.

UDHR: See UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

UNITED NATIONS CHARTER: Primary document of the United Nations setting forth its goals, functions and responsibilities; adopted in San Francisco in 1945.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT(Earth Summit): 1992 United Nations World Conference at Rio de Janeiro; put issues of environmental degradation into the world's public policy arena; resulted in the RIO DECLARATION, which paid particular attention to women's role in environmental management and sustainable development.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: World Conference on HUMAN RIGHTS at Vienna in 1993; produced the VIENNA DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION. Women's human rights advocates used the conference to push for recognition of WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II): Second World Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul in 1996; addressed housing and development and related concerns.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: The first United Nations World Conference on Population and Development took place in Bucharest, Romania in 1974; the latest Conference was in Cairo in 1994, producing the CAIRO PROGRAMME FOR ACTION.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: The first United Nations World Conference on Women took place in Mexico in 1975; subsequently, the UN proclaimed 1975-1985 the Decade for Women and conferences on women took place in Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985; the latest conference was in Beijing in 1995, producing the BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION; the next world conference on women is scheduled for 2005.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)(1948): Primary United Nations document establishing human rights standards and norms; although intended to be NON-BINDING, through time its various provisions have become so respected by states that it can be said to be CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW; one of three components of the INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS.

UNITED NATIONS DIVISION ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (DAW): UN body responsible for servicing the COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, the main policy-making body for women, and the COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER ON REFUGEES (UNHCR): The SPECIALIZED AGENCY of the United Nations that deals with refugee issues and related humanitarian concerns.

UNIVERSAL: Principle that every human being is entitled to human rights regardless of sex, race, colour, religion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other factor; rights." Universality means that governments and communities should uphold certain moral and ethical values that cut across all regions of the world.

UNIVERSAL LAW: Law so fundamental or basic that it is binding upon all states whether they have individually consented to it or not.

VIENNA DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION: Consensus document arising from the 1993 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS in Vienna; states that HUMAN RIGHTS are UNIVERSAL, INDIVISIBLE, INTERCONNECTED AND INTERRELATED; affirms that the human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights; recognizes violence against women as a HUMAN RIGHTS violation.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Violence against women includes, but is not be limited to, the following: a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence related to exploitation; b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs

WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR YUGOSLAVIA AND RWANDA: See STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991.

WHO: See WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

WOMEN'S CONVENTION: See CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS: Political strategy to underscore that women's rights are HUMAN RIGHTS, that is rights to which women are entitled simply for being human. This strategy adds both a focus on women into the human right movement and an emphasis on HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES into the women's rights movement; the main international document stating women's HUMAN RIGHTS is the CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY: Generally consists of activities aimed at influencing policies and decision-making at national and international levels to assure recognition and respect for WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS and to assure that the treatment of women is consistent with international human rights standards.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES: See DISABLED PERSONS.

WORLD BANK (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development): INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION (IFI) established originally to finance the reconstruction of Europe after World War II; since the 1950s has funded development projects in developing countries; encourages foreign investment through loan guarantees or direct investment of its own funds.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO): INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION under the auspices of the UNITED NATIONS that works to promote health worldwide.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: 1995 meeting in Copenhagen committed to eradication of poverty, marginalization and economic insecurity; paid particular attention to the needs of women.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO): Established in 1995 as the permanent successor to the GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE; provides MEMBER STATES with a forum on macroeconomic policy, trade-related negotiations and dispute resolution.

WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS: Established in 1982 by the SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES to study ways to promote and protect the human rights of indigenous people; has drafted a declaration on the rights of indigenous people for ADOPTION by the GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

[home](#)

Julie Mertus • Assistant Professor • American University • mertus@american.edu • (202) 885 - 1541

